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Alabama communities recognize businesses that employ people with disabilities

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), has planned a number of special events around the state as part of the October observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The events honor businesses that provide opportunities for successful employment for people with disabilities and recognize the success and contributions of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. This year's theme is "America's People, America's Talent...America's Strength!"

"Having individuals with disabilities in the workplace is good for the employer as well as the individual," said Byron White, interim coordinator for the October recognition events. "Companies report that employees with disabilities have better retention rates, and they consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, attendance, and safety."

Having individuals with disabilities in the workplace is also good for the economy, said White.

"For each \$1 that is spent on successfully rehabilitating an individual, \$21.95 is returned to the economy through his or her employment," White said.

The mission of ADRS is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. In fiscal year 2007, the department assisted 7,802 Alabamians with disabilities in becoming successfully employed.

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities was created in the late 1940's by Gov. Jim Folsom as a response to veterans with disabilities who returned home and found no work available. Since that time, many individuals with disabilities, both veterans and civilians, have received the benefit of activities of the Governor's Committee. The committee coordinates a network of local volunteer groups throughout the state and works closely with ADRS staff to develop employment opportunities and raise awareness of the needs and rights of Alabamians with disabilities.